2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939) 1943
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houses—that is, between the heir raised in the chief house of the head and the head's cattle-linked sister. The daughter of the cattle-linked brother comes as daughter-in-law to the mistress of the chief house, her cattle-linked aunt, to bear the heir, whether that house has a son or not; and legal precedences support this arrangement and succession. This emphasizes the power of the mother and her lineage. But the position of the cattle-linked sister is also strong, as we have indicated elsewhere, and in cases of succession to the headship of a district is further strengthened if she has been a wife of the queen. Conflicts do often arise and it is not strange that the queen usually leaves them to settle themselves. It is seldom that she interferes or interposes her authority, though she does so when the balance of convenience or interest strongly inclines one way. Tenure of headship is tolerably secure. The queen would only exceptionally and for very good reasons favour the displacement of a district head of one of the old groups; and in that case the district itself must strongly desire it while, not a stranger, but the nearest acceptable relative of the lineage will be substituted. If, however, the links with the royal family are not close, tenure by the lineage is less secure and it occasions no surprise that a man, coming to the queen with a few pounds, may be given a district where there has been trouble. We have seen a few such cases and it seemed incomprehensible to those with whom we discussed them that we suspected bribery and corruption.

The district is singularly autonomous in its political arrangements. Land is allotted by the district head not, as in many neighbouring tribes, by the chief. The district head, if he wishes, gives land to people living in other districts; at Mawa, for instance, non-residents hold over 300 fields. The district head reports the settlement of a stranger from another tribe by taking £1 to the queen, but it is to him as district owner that landholders annually bring beer. A non-resident also nowadays cultivates the district head with beer, clothes, and even money before asking for land. The land given to a non-resident is not very securely held; the tenure is so imperfectly institutionalized that practice varies from one district to another and definite rights and obligations cannot easily be deduced; on the whole, it is not unlike lending, though the culture does not recognize lending of land for a consideration. A non-resident holding land in a district, unlike a resident, cannot, generally speaking, interchange it with or lend it to others without the consent of the head; but at the capital he can, even without reporting to the queen; and there also a resident may break new land without any one's permission.

Land tenure is too complicated for treatment here, but we may note that where a district head takes back the land of a resident, the queen's court may, but does not usually, interfere in the interests not so much of security of land tenure as of peace. If a resident quarrels with the district head, he cannot beg pardon with beer, highly though that method of reconciliation is appraised, because he would be 'humbling himself with the swallow of the land' or, as it is sometimes phrased, 'paying a fine with the calf of the cattle of the district head'. A resident migrating from the district should bid its head farewell with 'the beer of greeting'; application

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for land would then be regarded more favourably should he one day return. The fruits of the soil are dealt with in much the same manner. A man may graze his cattle inside or outside the district, but the cattle posts of the old days were within the district only. We have mentioned the rivalries of herdboys of different districts; we may add that some district heads, because of traditional values and limited grazing land, object to fencing. District heads sometimes reserve valuable trees for themselves, and it is they who give permission for the cutting down of large and shady trees or indigenous fruit-trees (though they be on the landowner's land). Honey found in trees, but not that found in the ground allotted, belongs to the district head. Some heads allow only residents to cut grass, making others pay. Hunting and water rights are not so regulated, but digging of clay is sometimes, if illegally. The preservation of large forests, a national asset, as places of the gods or of refuge in time of war is the concern of the queen, so that, for instance, Mujaji II had her cattle driven into the gardens of some people, including a district head, who had cleared part of the *Leuyeni* forest and had not begged pardon by sending a *mupawani* to her.

Some distinctive cultural and administrative arrangements of the districts have already been mentioned. There are many others. All district heads used to have, and many still have, certain fields cultivated for them. The queen also has such fields in her districts, and since 1927 each district head has had to cultivate a field (*murewo*) in his district for the queen, an innovation suggested by the European to enable the queen to help her people during famines. The experiment has turned out very differently. These fields are badly cultivated, for years some district heads bring no mealies, the failure only sporadically leading to the penalization of the head and his district, and the mealies are always converted into beer for entertainments at the capital that benefit only the local residents. The storage of mealies is impracticable and a system of distribution is not implied in cultural arrangements. A district head unwillingly surrenders land and sometimes expropriates first one then another landowner, so that there is much dissatisfaction and even refusal to cultivate the *murewo*.

In many respects district heads are like chiefs. They are often called 'chief' (*khosi*) and, like the queen, have medicines to safeguard them in their position of authority. A district head is not only the most important person in the district, the centre of its political and legal life, the man who is responsible for the welfare of his people, but the obligations of district residents towards him emphasize both his position and the reciprocities between ruler and subject. It is expected that his subjects shall bring him beer periodically, and sometimes it is held that he should be invited to every beer party held in his area, partly because he is responsible for order at the beer drink and partly because it is his due. All his subjects must make *murula* cider for him in the proper season, and similarly, when at certain ceremonies, held by him for the well-being of the district, beer is required, every resident must contribute. The most important occasion is at the harvest thanksgiving and the beer brought is regarded as being in return for the land given by the head to his people. On the pattern of

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their right to their lands. It is usual for people to 'beg' fields also in areas other than that in which they are living, partly to take advantage of diverse climatic conditions, partly because of land shortage; but their right to these is not as strong as to fields in their home district. Land shortage has not yet reached serious proportions owing to the fact that since the 1920's the tribe has been buying up sparsely populated Crown lands to the north. Grazing and the right to collect wood, thatching grass, wild fruits and plants for economic use are free to all, though herd-boys jealously guard good pastures in their own areas to which they feel they have first right.

Livestock takes the form chiefly of cattle and goats; fowls, still forbidden at the Capital, were introduced by the Tsonga; donkeys and pigs are a European innovation, the former being popular among Christians for use in ploughing and transport, the latter being kept largely by women for exchange purposes. Though of considerable economic importance cattle play little part in the diet of the people, being used mainly for ritual purposes and as bride-price. They move in a chain of marriage exchanges from one family to another, creating and maintaining social links and knitting together in preferred marriage the descendants of brothers and sisters. It was calculated in 1939 that bride-price accounted for 95 per cent of all transfers of cattle in the Lobedu tribe.[1] Cattle coming in as bride-price are not supposed to be used for any other purpose than marriage for, unlike the Zulu who kept large herds, constantly replenished in the old days by raids against neighbours, most Lobedu families do not possess cattle except for short periods of time.

Lobedu ideas of property and their attitude to its possession and accumulation are rather different from ours. The correct use of cattle in Lobedu eyes lies not in accumulation but in their investment in 'building a house', i.e., setting up a new social and economic unit of a wife and children. Surplus crops, similarly, are not accumulated but are generally consumed in a succession of after-harvest beer parties in honour of kin and affines which adds considerably to one's prestige. This, so often cited as evidence of wastefulness and lack of foresight is, in the absence of any really reliable termite- or pest-proof form of storage (which makes accumulation risky), a means of insur-

[1] Krige, J. D., 1939, p. 398.

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938, 1961-1962) 1964
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595 422 583 house should not be used by the son of another house. If this is done (as it sometimes is if one wife has only daughters and another only sons) this immediately establishes a new relationship between half-brother and sister who now become cattle-linked; and the girl whose cattle were used has the right to 'follow the tracks of her cattle' to ask for a daughter-in-law from that 'house'.

595 423 602 A 'house' is never wholly dependent in economic matters on the husband and his lineage. It has other possible sources to exploit. Thus a married woman may, and often does, get fields [428] from her own people to cultivate. The difference between these fields and those given by her husband's people is that the latter are hers as a right and are inherited by her sons; the former she obtains through the goodwill of her blood-kin and on her death they revert back to them unless the children are still 573 602 young and the fields are needed to feed them. Similarly, though it is the father's duty and responsibility to help his sons to marry and though uterine brothers always help one another, a man who has a married sister very often turns to her husband or to the sister's son for help with cattle to marry a wife. There is a difference, however, between help given by a uterine brother and that given by a relative on the mother's side or an affine—a brother does not expect to be repaid but help from other categories of relative becomes converted into a marriage bond or has to be repaid. The close bond between uterine brothers is indicated in the saying 'uterine brothers share even the head of a locust'.

595 602 769 Each 'house' is distinguished, then, from that of other wives of the husband by its cattle-links and obligations to the wife's side of the family (and later the daughters' husbands' families) and by dependence on ancestors on the mother's (i.e., wife's) side in addition to those on the father's side.

595 In the case of preferential marriage, too, the 'house' is all-important. Here, in contrast to marriage with strangers where the boy's family initiates negotiations, the first approach is usually made by the girl's people who bring the matter in the first instance to their sister, the woman of the 'house' concerned. Thus, for example, when Dumedi obtained cattle from the marriage of his eldest daughter by his first wife (a mother's brother's daughter) her people approached his mother